

months of groceries, health care services, household utilities, or go toward their children's education at a local community college.

Now is the time not for promises but for action.

If this Congress wants to encourage work we must reward working families by increasing the minimum wage and giving them hope for a better future.

It is time to give America's workers a raise.

SUPPORT THE INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION

(Mr. WELDON of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, the House will be considering the authorization bill for NASA next week, which includes funding for the international space station.

You will hear arguments from opponents of the space station. If their rhetoric sounds familiar, it should. They are the same arguments used last year, and the year before that, and the year before that. In fact, they are the same arguments used by opponents of any visionary project throughout history.

Space station opponents are trying to sink our country's investment in the future.

Opponents do not want you to hear that the space station is on schedule and on budget, or that nearly 90,000 pounds of hardware have been built by the United States and our international partners.

Opponents of the space station want you to cut it because they claim we cannot afford it.

I tell you now that we can't afford not to build the space station. We cannot turn our backs now on the men and women who have worked to make the space station and its promising future a reality.

I urge everyone to support the international space station—a vote for the space station is a vote for our children's future.

WHAT GOP REALLY STANDS FOR

(Mr. GUTIERREZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I drove by the gas station today. Premium was up. Unleaded was up. But the minimum wage—the salary earned by a lot of people who buy the gas and pump the gas—was stuck right where it had been.

Gas prices might be at their highest point in years, but the buying power of the minimum wage is soon to be at its lowest point in 40 years. Our lowest paid employees are getting gouged everywhere—at the gas station, at the grocery store. But, instead of giving minimum wage employees a break, the Republicans tell them to wait.

Yes, two bucks a gallon is a lot to pay—especially when you are only making four and a quarter an hour.

But, of course, the Republicans are careful not to cut into the profit margin of the oil companies. After all—that is the Republicans' profit margin, too. In the past few years, oil and gas companies have pumped millions of dollars into Republican campaign coffers. Now I finally realize what GOP stands for—gas, oil, and petroleum.

America's gas tanks are running on empty, but the Republican Party is out of gas.

REPEAL THE GAS TAX

(Mr. KINGSTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, that last 1-minute was almost ridiculous. Why is your gas going up? Well, yes, it has to do with market, and perhaps there is a little too much coziness between the big oil companies, who have always been putting generous donations into Democratic campaign coffers. But one thing we must never forget is that gas, every single gallon, is 4.3 cents higher because Bill Clinton resides in the White House, and under a Democrat majority Congress they increased your gas prices 4.3 cents per gallon and Americans have been paying that for 2½ years.

I ask my Democrat colleagues who are so concerned about America's working class to join me in asking the President to repeal his excessive 4.3-cents-per-gallon gas tax and let us give Americans a little help this summer.

LET THE CHIPS FALL

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Agriculture spends \$200 million a year on the Environmental Quality Incentives Program known as EQUIP. Now the focus of the purpose of EQUIP is manure. That is right, manure. And after years of studies and reports and after hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars, the Department of Agriculture has come to several conclusions.

No. 1, big farm animals produce more manure than small farm animals. And, No. 2, manure stinks. Beam me up. Mr. Speaker—\$200 million to determine that manure stinks.

I think these environmentalists over at the Department of Agriculture have been smelling too many methane fumes. Why not just let the chips fall where they may, stockpile a little of it, and tell these monarchs and dictators overseas if they keep jacking around with oil prices, we are going to turn Elsie loose.

I yield back the balance of this methane.

WELFARE INVITES COMPARISONS TO SLAVERY

(Mr. FRANKS of Connecticut asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FRANKS of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, in slavery people worked but were not paid. In our current welfare system people do not work but they are paid. Neither system can be condoned. It took a Republican President, Abraham Lincoln, to end slavery and it appears as though it will take a Republican President to end welfare as we know it.

When President Clinton had a Democrat-controlled Congress, there was no welfare bill to vote on. Now that the Republicans control Congress, President Clinton has repeatedly vetoed welfare reform.

But unlike then-Governor Clinton's 12-year failure to do what 48 other States did easily, pass a State civil rights bill, we should not wait on welfare reform. We should not continue to have a system that has been like a 20th century version of slavery. Welfare and slavery have both provided the basic necessities while leaving their victims filled with despair.

CALL FOR IMPOSITION OF WINDFALL PROFITS

(Mr. MARKEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, the Republicans want to repeal the 4.3-cent gasoline tax. Let us debate that. But there is no guarantee that the oil companies are going to lower prices by 4.3 cents, so the consumer would just ride over to the gasoline station, pay the extra 4.3 cents that the oil companies had in lower prices and they wind up with no extra money in their pocket. The only way in which we can be sure that the consumer gets a break is if we impose a windfall profits tax on oil companies.

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In that way, the consumer, as taxpayer, will get that 4 cents back into their pocket.

In addition, down in Texas, Koch and Citgo and Coastal have closed down 300,000 barrels of oil refinery gasoline per day as of last Friday. Up in New Jersey, there is another 190,000 barrels that Tosco is not producing.

We need the President to move in, to use his Executive power, to jawbone these energy executives, so that the 500,000 barrels of idle gasoline refining capacity is put back on line by this weekend, so that we flood the marketplace with gasoline. That drops the price of oil in the global and American marketplace.

TAX INCREASES NOT A SOLUTION

(Mr. HAYWORTH asked and was given permission to address the House